

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Thos Moser Cabinetmaker Inc

Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Innovation Program Helps Thomas Moser Cabinetmakers Craft a New Culture

Client Profile:

Thomas Moser, a former college professor, began crafting one-of-a-kind furniture over 30 years ago. With the help of his wife and four sons, Thomas Moser Cabinetmakers was born. Today, Tom Moser is still involved in the designs and concepts of furniture that is produced by a staff of 95 craftspeople in their state-of-the-art, woodworking facility in Auburn, Maine. The company sells their handcrafted pieces through their catalog and from six showrooms located across the U.S.

Situation:

With competition in the furniture industry from other parts of the country as well as from overseas, Colleen McCracken, company CFO, believed you need to balance the ambience of the craft and craftspeople with the product. The company had been involved in some basic Lean training workshops through the Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Maine MEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, but when the Lean leader left the company, their in-house work fell by the wayside. They needed to learn how to work together as a team rather than as individual craftspeople and contacted the Maine MEP for help.

Solution:

Maine MEP Project Manager, Wayne Messer, had done work with Thomas Moser over the years and was called upon to assist the company with their continual improvement initiative. Wayne knew that the Maine MEP Technical Skills Training and Innovation Program, funded through the U.S. Department of Labor, was available to assist companies in Maine improve the technical skills of their workforce to drive innovative thinking. He felt that the company would meet the criteria to qualify for the funding. The first step of the process was to perform a Strategic and Technology Roadmapping Assessment to match a workforce development plan to the strategic direction of the company. The assessment of Thomas Moser Cabinetmakers and their procedures and processes was global in nature. It helped Thomas Moser validate things that they already realized they needed to address. From the assessment findings, the company was able to determine a strategic plan that helped them to look to the future instead of just through the current year. In addition, the resultant workforce development plan included operational and leadership components. Teams were trained in the skills of Value Stream Mapping which follows the company processes from start to finish and identifies the waste that will keep them from moving to the ideal future state. When they find opportunities that need an extensive focus, a Kaizen or Rapid Improvement event is planned. The integration of the leadership and lean skills training is used to choose the appropriate team makeup. Thirty-five employees were trained as a direct result of the Maine MEP Technical Skills Training and Innovation Program. Twenty different training programs were implemented as a result of the Strategic and Technology Roadmapping Assessment and associated workforce development plan. Based on the training that was completed, on-going training programs are in place to continue to support growth and measurement systems have been put into practice to monitor the resultant impacts.

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Results:

- * Realized \$102,625 in cost savings.
- * Invested \$173,909 in workforce development.

Testimonial:

"Without the influences of the Maine MEP, the project management by Wayne Messer, and the financial support from the Technical Skills Training and Innovation Program, we would not have been able to do training in the condensed period of time required in order to remain competitive. It has allowed us to move at a faster pace which is very important."

Colleen McCracken, Chief Financial Officer